

HEALTH EFFICIENCY.

Elsewhere in the JOURNAL will be found a report of the physical examinations of 1495 men employed by the Weed Lumber Company. Other companies are pursuing the same policy of having all their employees given a thorough physical examination, and the result has been remarkable in many ways. In the first place, a considerable number of abnormal conditions are found and recorded which prevents the laborer at some time in the future claiming that such abnormality was due to accident. For instance, out of the 1495 men covered by this report, it is seen that 37% had hernia, and that 46% had some trouble with their eyes, twenty being blind in one eye and 77 having very poor vision in both eyes.

CORRECTION.

Through a mistake in the JOURNAL office, the proof of the advertisement of W. B. Saunders Company, appearing in the June issue of the JOURNAL, was not forwarded in time for certain corrections to be made. Graves' Gynecology was the book advertised, and the price should have been stated: cloth \$7.00 net, half morocco \$8.50 net.

HEALTH INSURANCE.

The medical aspect of health insurance will soon attain the same importance here that it has already attained in New York, where a health insurance bill was presented to the legislature of the past winter. There, the bill introduced without hope of passage the first year, did not contain detailed provisions for the administration of medical care under health insurance. In the two months following the public hearing on the bill the American Association for Labor Legislation has been giving earnest consideration to the medical aspect, and now, upon the basis of suggestions put forward by representative doctors, it has drafted provisions for the organization of medical benefit.

These sections provide in brief that the insurance carriers, subject to the approval of the state social insurance commission, may select the method of administration most suited to local conditions, through either a panel of doctors to which all legally qualified physicians may belong, and from among whom the insured patients shall have free choice of physician; or through salaried physicians, with reasonable free choice; or finally through physicians engaged for specified districts. The merits and demerits of various bases of payments are carefully considered in the explanatory material accompanying the bill, although the bill itself does not yet contain provisions to this effect. Representation of the medical point of view is gained through a physician member of the state supervisory commission, through consultation with a medical advisory board, and through local committees. To avoid a repetition of some of the unfavorable foreign experience the maximum number of insured patients whom a physician may treat is specified. This will prevent an undue concentration of the insured patients among a few physicians, and thus

will prevent the abuses which result from an impossibly large insurance practice. This step, admirable in its intentions, might appear arbitrary, if it had not been worked out with the advice and cooperation of the medical profession.

It is upon such points as these, affecting both the character of the insurance practice and the physicians themselves, that consultation between the California Social Insurance Commission and the Medical Society of the State of California will be most valuable.

"SCIENCE"—?

A gentleman named Cyrus L. Topliff, who apparently from his card is connected with the *Scientific American*, has sent in a little circular, possibly a reprint of an item from the *Scientific American*, on the subject of the cancer problem. It is rather interesting, as coming from one apparently connected with the *Scientific American*, to read the following, and in reading it, one cannot but wonder where we are going to land if such extraordinary views proceed from supposedly scientific sources.

"As the mind is the only power which can overstrain or weaken the nervous system, it is reasonable to suppose that we must first study the action of the mind over the body before we can discover the real fundamental cause of any inflammatory or malignant form of disease.

"Fear and worry are synonymous, and inseparable in a person's mind. Therefore, fear is really the fundamental cause of many diseases, and the various forms of such depend largely on what particularly harmful thoughts are combined with fear in each patient.

"If the medical profession fail to solve this difficult problem, it is possible that some 'layman,' who has given much thought and study to the subject, and experimented on scientific lines, may ultimately succeed in demonstrating the fundamental cause, and if it can be accomplished, then much of the mystery of all diseases will disappear and health and happiness will be much more general than at the present time."

SOCIAL INSURANCE.

Herewith is a brief report of a meeting of the Committee on Social Insurance of the Medical Society of the State of California, held in San Francisco May 20th. Elsewhere in the JOURNAL there will be found some additional matter relating to this most important subject and a copy of the circular of information which was sent to all county society secretaries. A great deal of interest and enthusiasm on this subject seems to have been raised and it is a most fortunate thing that such is the case. The statement of Dr. Lambert, chairman of a similar committee of the American Medical Association, to the effect that in his judgment this is the most momentous and important problem facing the medical profession of the United States, is undoubtedly true, and its truth is

evidenced by a committee of the A. M. A. with an appropriation sufficient to permit it to do whatever is needed in the way of keeping the medical profession in touch with what is going on.

EXPERTS IN OUR MALPRACTICE CASES.

Something over a year ago, a careful review was made of a number of suits brought against our members for damages for alleged malpractice, with the idea of finding out what doctors were testifying as experts for the plaintiff in these various cases. The result is very interesting. As a rule the experts who testify for the plaintiff in malpractice cases need very little consideration on our part, as either ignorance or prejudice is, in almost every instance, so palpable that it is apparent to the jury that the expert does not know what he is talking about, or else that there is personal animus against the defendant physician. This condition of things has developed quite naturally and without any extraneous influence, and is therefore the more fortunate, for the plaintiff is unable to claim inability to obtain experts to testify on his behalf. There would be great danger if the feeling should develop, or build up, that all the doctors in the State or in the Society were leagued together so firmly that no plaintiff could ever get an expert to testify for him. Out of several hundred cases that have passed through this office, we can recall only three or four in which there was any real merit in the plaintiff's claim of negligence. In nearly every suit there is no shadow of ground for the complaint of the plaintiff and therefore we have an absolutely honest defense, and there can be little danger in opening wide the field of expert testimony on behalf of the plaintiff. We have little to fear from perfectly honest experts, and very little more to fear from the ignorance of the expert ordinarily called by the plaintiff, or from one who is biased, as it is generally possible to disclose the bias, and the ignorance is self-evident.

COUNTY SOCIETY ACTIVITY.

Some of the county medical societies, especially in the southern part of the State, have been, and are, very active, and in ways that are distinctly progressive. Last month we commented on the Library Association of the San Diego County Society. San Bernardino County has had a Physicians Club for some years. In Riverside the activities of the County Society have been marked and liberal. Frequently meetings are held in nearby counties, thus securing larger audiences, bringing more men together, and increasing the friendly feeling between different county societies. In April the meeting of the Riverside County Society was held at El Centro in Imperial County, and the physicians of Imperial Valley, San Bernardino County and Riverside County were all invited to attend. An excellent program was prepared and a two-days outing was enjoyed by a large number of members.

COUNTY SOCIETY NOTICES.

June 1, 1916.

To all County Society Secretaries:

Dear Doctor:

Enclosed is some matter from the Committee on Health Insurance which is of the greatest importance to every physician. You should read it carefully and present the gist of it to your Society, and at the same time urge them to follow carefully all that is published on this subject in the STATE JOURNAL from month to month.

The State Society, at the Fresno meeting, authorized the Council to prepare a plan whereby such members as wished to might contribute to a fund for the purpose of paying judgments and the like; in other words, covering such members as fully as any insurance company could do. The full details of this plan and arrangement will appear in the July number of the JOURNAL. Please urge your members to look for this and study it carefully when it comes out.

Cordially yours,

PHILIP MILLS JONES,
Secretary.

To County Societies:

Your attention is herewith called to the following facts:

1. The last legislature authorized, and the Governor has appointed, a Commission to Investigate and Report upon Systems of Social Insurance.
2. This Commission has undertaken an intensive study of sickness insurance, this seeming more practicable for the present than the study of insurance against old age, invalidity, unemployment and death.
3. This Commission will undoubtedly make some report to the legislature in January; i. e., at a period prior to the 1917 meeting of the State Society.
4. It is doubtful whether this Commission will recommend a bill creating sickness insurance at the January meeting of the legislature. It is probable that further time for study will be required.
5. The State Medical Society has been asked by this Commission to appoint a committee to consult with it. This has been done.
6. The State Society's Committee feels that in the study of sickness insurance, it is important that the entire profession take an active part. The legislature will have met before this Committee will have been able to report to the Society at large.
7. It therefore and hereby requests the appointment of a Social Insurance Committee in every county medical society.
8. The State Committee will keep in touch with all county committees, and endeavor to place all available information at their disposal.
9. The work is important. Please appoint your